(c) what are the reasons for the decline in consumption; and

(d) whether the decline in cotton consumption is leading to decline in production also?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The consumption of cotton in the country has been marginally increasing. The figures of consumption in the country are 84.71, 91.15 and 91.65 lakh bales during 1983-84, 1984-85 and 1985-86 respectively.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

Unskilled Indian Labourers in Middle East

1939. SHRI SUBAS MOHANTY: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) the number of unskilled Indian labourers at present working in the Middle-East countries including the names of such countries;

(b) the measures proposed to be taken by Government to safeguard the interests of such workers and the Indian contracting firms; and

(c) the assistance rendered by the Indian Embassies in these countries to safeguard their interests?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) About 4 lakh Unskilled Indian labourers are working in the following Middle-East countries:—

Kuwait, Saudi-Arabia, UAE, Oman, Bahrain, Qatar, Iraq, Libya, etc.

(b) Recruitment is regulated through registered recruiting agencies and employment contracts are duly attested.

(c) The Indian Embassies abroad take up the grievances of Indian workers with the local employers, Labour Courts and the local Governments.

Amount due under ESIS in Orissa

1940. SHRI SUBAS MOHANTY: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) the total amount due to the workers in Orissa on account of Employees State Insurance Scheme;

(b) the steps taken to recover the arrears from the companies for payment to the workers; and

(c) the reasons for delay in making payment to the workers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) The insured persons under the ESI Scheme are entitled to cash benefits in the contingencies of sickness, maternity and employment injury. The amount due to the workers in the above mentioned contingencies are paid to them as and when their claims are finalised. The question of total amount due to the workers does not, therefore arise;

(b) The payment to the workers is not dependent on recovery of arrears from the employers. The ESI authorities are, however, taking the following steps for realisation of the outstanding dues from the defaulting establishments:—

(1) Revenue recovery certificates are being issued under Section 45B of the ESI Act;

(2) Prosecution cases are being filed under section 85 of the ESI Act;

(3) Complaints are being filed with the Police authorities under section 406/409 IPC for non-payment of employees' share of contribution deducted from the wages of the employees;